



John Reich Journal

Volume 21 / Issue 3

December 2011

JRCS

JOHN REICH COLLECTORS SOCIETY
P.O. Box 1680 Windham, ME 04062

The purpose of the John Reich Collectors Society (JRCS) is to encourage the study of numismatics, particularly United States gold and silver coins minted before the introduction of the Seated Liberty design, and to provide technical and educational information concerning such coins.

Annual dues\$25.00
 Life Membership\$625.00

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The John Reich Journal is the official publication of the Society and is distributed to all members in good standing. Members are encouraged to submit any articles encouraging the study of numismatics and / or relating to early United States gold and silver coins to the editors. Especially needed are articles containing new information about die marriages, die states of published die marriages, attribution methods, collections, collectors, etc.

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Cover Photos: Newly discovered JR14 Bust Dime.

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John Reich Journal

Official publication of the
John Reich Collectors Society

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Editors' Comments

I must, with a heavy heart, inform those of you who have not yet heard of the death of David Davis. Davis lost his battle with cancer November 2nd. David was one of the founding members of our organization serving as the only president until this year and was the first editor of our journal. David's dedication to the John Reich Collector's Society will be sorely missed. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family in this sorrowful time. The journal was already full by the time of David's death so we are encouraging members to send their remembrances of David for publication in the next issue.

There are some changes coming to the society to streamline our membership process. We will be closing the Harrison PO Box this month. All dues payments should now go to our secretary, Steve Crain, at PO Box 1680 Windham, ME 04062. You will notice a dues request in this issue of the journal. Please send Steve your check as soon as possible to ensure you continue to receive your copy of the JRJ. Also, the ballot for voting for the Jules Reiver Literacy Award is on the back of your dues notice. Please take time to vote for your favorite article(s).

It is also time to begin planning the annual EAC/JRCS convention that is being held in Buffalo. This year's convention will be held May 3-6 at the Adams Mark Hotel 120 Church Street. You can visit the EAC website at www.eacs.org for more information. There will be a "happening" on Thursday evening to view coins of selected die marriages in each of the silver series. We need volunteers to man the tables at the event. Please contact me at jrcs19@roadrunner.com if you are able to help. Keep in touch through the JRCS enews to decide which die marriages should be studied.

There is also a JRCS regional meeting scheduled for the FUN convention. The meeting will be held on Friday afternoon. Please check the convention program for exact time and place. We will have an educational presentation and time for socializing. We look forward to seeing you there!

Happy Holidays to all!

NOTICE

Bust Quarter Census information is now being solicited for inclusion in the next issue of the **John Reich Journal**.

Please email your complete inventory listing
(Including ALL duplicates and die states)
of your Bust Quarters dated 1796-1838
Remember your 1815 and 1825 E and L Counterstamps.
or any questions to:
Glenn Peterson at gpeters@tds.net

Or, mail hard copies to:

Glenn Peterson
9301 Park West Blvd.
Knoxville, TN 37923

Please respond promptly to ensure inclusion of your collection in this Census.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letter from Jack White:

Regarding the 1834 JR6 dime in its stages of die deterioration. I recently saw a coin with a full cud at "MERI", a low grade one, and was curious about its rarity as a full cud. The 2002 Logan sale catalog lists three coins- none in this die state. Likewise the Reiver sale catalog (2006) lists a die state B, E, F, G, and H. The catalog lists "H" as a "very late die state", it further adds "so far as is known, none of the retained cuds advanced to become full cuds." I know this isn't the case because I have a coin with a full cud from A3 to arrowheads. Reiver had an AG 1832 JR3 with an A3 to arrowheads cud in his collection so wouldn't he have had even a low grade 1834 JR6 in a similar die state had he located one?

Dr. Glenn Peterson touches on this subject in JRJ 16/2 in February 2005. Jim Matthews does as well in his "Retained and Full Cuds" article in JRJ 16/3 in June 2005. Neither mentions a full cud at "MERI". Finally, states "cracks around legend progressed to the degree where cuds freely appeared around the periphery of the coin."

Jack White

Jim Matthews Response:

The 1834 JR6 variety can come very late. Logan's and Reiver's were higher grade coins- (I bought several from each auction) and have others - In worn condition the "Cud" at MERI appears full but it is not - Simply wear on the retained Cud area.

I don't believe this is a significant later die state unless the stars on the Obverse are nearly gone or entirely missing (Confirmation of a full Cud).

Jim Matthews



A Mistaken Lot Yields Treasures Beyond Belief

W. David Perkins, NLG

For 15 years I've had a wooden box sitting on my desk, or always close by.

I have this box somewhat by chance, but more because I won a Lot in the September 12, 1995 *The Armand Champa Library Sale Part Three*, and wrote a letter. Lot 2093 in this Auctions by Bowers & Merena, Inc. sale was cataloged as follows;

2093 [M. H. BOLENDER]: [*Miscellaneous File Regarding Early Silver Dollars*], a file folder containing 16 fine photographs, on card stock, of the obverses and reverses of 1795-1803 dollars in magnifications of 1x and 2x; includes a page proof from *The Numismatist*, December 1952 announcing a new variety of 1795, annotated photocopies of Boyd and Bolender sales, Merkin invoice from 9/18/68 sale made out to Joe Presley for \$10,5000, plus other notes and clippings on early dollars (\$100.00).

I won the lot for \$77.00, on a reduced bid. I had thought this lot had been the property of Milferd H. Bolender when I bid on it. Bolender was the a collector and dealer of early dollars (and other coins) and the author of *The United States Early Silver Dollars From 1794 to 1803*, first published in 1950. This Lot turned out to have been the property of Dr. Joseph A. Presley of Baton Rouge, LA. I wasn't familiar with Dr. Presley's name, or with him having been a collector of the early U.S. silver dollars 1794-1803.

Little did I know at the time all the treasures and great stories that this lot would yield.

Shortly after receiving the lot, on September 28, 1995, I wrote a short letter addressed to Dr. Presley and sent it to two different addresses I had found for him in the group lot that I had acquired. I wrote in my letter that I was interested in talking with him regarding his early dollar collection and his purchases in the September 18, 1968 Lester Merkin public auction sale that had been held in New York City. As some of you may know, this sale contained a large run of early silver dollars 1794-1803 by die variety and pedigree. [*I have written before that I had learned through the purchase of the Ostheimer copy of this sale catalog at a Denver Coin show, complete with the auction settlement on Lester Merkin's stationery made out to Alfred and Jacque Ostheimer, that among other Lots the Ostheimers consigned all but two of the early dollars in this sale.*]

They had a fantastic collection of early dollars, half or so sold in this 1968 sale and the other half privately to the Goldberg's a couple of years later.]

I included my phone number in my letter to Dr. Presley. Dr. Presley called me shortly after he received the letter; our conversation resulted in Dr. Presley graciously sending me copies of his early dollar notes and correspondence, including a listing of the early dollar collection of Frank Stirling, a Baton Rouge, Louisiana early dollar specialist that I was aware of (but I did not have a listing of his collection at this time).

I compared the approximately 75 early dollars listed in Frank Stirling's collection at this time (letter est. 1960s) to 25 early dollars offered in the Heritage Numismatic Auctions, Inc. *1986 A.N.A. Mid-Winter Auction*, February 20-22, 1986 in Salt Lake City. Heritage made the comment in this auction catalog,

These 25 early American dollars constitute the major portion of the collection of a famous American numismatist from Louisiana. Although HNAI was unable to use this gentleman's name, advanced Bolender collectors will decipher the owner's name due to the uniqueness of these properties. We trust that you will derive as much pleasure from viewing these as we did in cataloguing them; and for those of you fortunate enough to acquire one of these treasures, rest assured that you will have found a heritage of numismatists that undoubtably [sic.] will be difficult to duplicate.

By matching the list of 25 dollars from the list of the Stirling Collection I had received, I confirmed that these 25 Lots were once the property of Frank M. Stirling. I also now knew, with pretty good odds, that there might be 50 or more early dollars from the Stirling Collection "out there somewhere." Many years later I was selected by the Stirling family to appraise the Stirling early dollar collection. I was the first one in many decades to get see the approximately 50 early dollars that had not been sold in the 1986 Heritage sale, including quite a few R-8 and R-7 varieties.

In the years following I was able to handle a few of the rare early dollars in the Stirling collection. One of these was the Unique 1795 B-19, BB-19 dollar. When viewing and studying this lot for the first time with a grandson of Frank Stirling, we discovered that not only was it the only known specimen of this die marriage but it had a silver plug center!

Note that in the Bowers book, *The Silver Dollars of the United States, A Complete Encyclopedia* (Published in 1993) under “Notable Specimens” for 1795 BB-19, B-19 it was written,

Stirling Specimen. * The 5th revised edition of the Bolender book, Krause Publications, 1988, p. 21, notes: “Specimen reported in the Frank Stirling Collection.” The collection of the late Frank M. Stirling was dispersed during his lifetime, and this specimen of BB-19 now resides with another owner.

As we now know, this information in the Bowers book pertaining to the Stirling Specimen of 1795 B-19, BB-19 turned out to be incorrect. The 75 early dollars mentioned above were not dispersed during his lifetime and not all have been dispersed to date.

In 2006 this specimen was sold to Warren Miller, thus enabling Miller to be the only one to ever complete a collection of all of the 118 regular issue die marriages 1794-1803. *[For more information, see Coin World, May 22, 2006: “Early dollar collector first to complete die marriages / Acquisition of unique B-19 variety ends quest.” Special to Coin World. Page 1, continued on page 106.]*

One of my favorite coins in the Stirling Collection was the Stirling Discovery Specimen of the 1796 B-6, BB-25 Silver Dollar with only “three leaves under the first S in STATES vs. the four leaves under all but two examples known of 1795 B-6, BB-25.” Many thought the fourth leaf did not show due to a clogged die at the time of striking. We were able to prove after studying the coin at the 2007 EAC Convention in St. Louis, the fourth leaf was actually added (to an already hardened and used die) and other parts of the die were strengthened and / or re-engraved! *[For more information, see PCGS Rare Coin Market Report, July 2007 – Vol. 1 No. 4, “How Far Would the Mint Go?” by John Dannreuther.]* PCGS called this the “Missing Leaf” (dollar) and gave it a new variety number. This specimen was the Discovery Specimen reported in the “page proof” (part of the Presley Lot I purchased in the Champa Sale) for the December 1952 article in *The Numismatist*.

Dr. Presley also collected Numismatic Literature and catalogs, and loved to “plate match” and trace pedigrees of the early dollars in his and other collections. He had an extensive run of rare plated Chapman catalogs as well as other key early dollar sales and other literature.

Another item acquired from Dr. Presley was a letter dated September 2, 1975 from a young attorney at Jones, Walker, Waechter, Poitevent, Carrere & Denegre in New Orleans, LA. The attorney was a James A. Hayes. The letter read,

Dear Doctor Presley,

I had asked Frank Stirling to contact you and see whether you would be interested in selling your library of coin catalogs. On August 25, 1975 he forwarded a letter to me indicating that you might consider selling but would be very busy for the remainder of the week. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to mention that I must be in Baton Rouge on Friday, September 5, 1975 and would very much like to have an opportunity to meet with you and perhaps see the catalogs.

Please let me know if this would be possible.

Many Numismatists will recognize the attorney James A. Hayes as “Jimmy Hayes,” a former Congressman from Louisiana who assembled a world class “First Year of Issue” Collection. This collection of 128 exceptional Lots was sold by Stack’s on October 22, 1985. The introduction to this sale noted,

The Jimmy Hayes Type Collection of United States Silver Coins is one of the most unusual ever sold. It consists of the first year of issue of virtually every type of United States silver coins from the Three Cent pieces to the Silver Dollar including the Commemorative series. Nearly every coin is Gem Uncirculated. The 1794 Half Dime, 1796 Dime, 1796 Quarter, 1794 Half Dollar, and 1794 Silver Dollar are particularly beautiful. The term “Finest Known” becomes a common term in describing the coins in his collection. There is no question in our mind that it is The Finest Quality Collection ever sold at auction.

I wrote Mr. Hayes, and included a copy of the letter he wrote to Dr. Presley in 1975. Mr. Hayes confirmed that he was successful in acquiring Dr. Presley’s library.

At the Denver ANA Convention in 1996, dealer Julian Leidman paged me (as I had shared this story with him). When I got to Julian’s table he introduced me to Jimmy Hayes! Mr. Hayes thanked me for sharing the letter and story, and told me he would

send me a couple of items that he had acquired from Dr. Presley when he acquired his Library. One of the items turned out to be a set of negatives for many of the early dollars in the Bolender Collection and that were plated his book! I believe these negatives came from Frank Stirling, working with M. H. Bolender. Stirling was a photographer by profession and per my research, over the years he generously shared photos he had of early dollars with Bolender and many collectors in the 1950s and 1960s.

It turns out that Dr. Presley was at a medical convention in Chicago, and at the last minute decided to book a flight from Chicago to New York City and attend the Merkin '68 sale in person. In a letter to me dated October 9, 1996, Dr. Presley wrote,

I flew to N.Y. for the Lester Merkin '68 Sale and bought \$10,000 of the early dollars. 9 of the dollars had pictures of Obv Rev in the catalog. I decopaged and stained a box, lined it in red leather and put the 9 o+r [*Obverse and Reverse photos*] on the front. This used to be one of my prized possessions. I am sending this to you. I believe you will enjoy having it. I am including my "record of purchases" book. In it it shows 15 early dollars purchased on 9/18/68. I didn't think I bought that many at the auction. I don't remember any one out bidding me on any Early Dollars. I don't remember Jules or Emanuel [*I had asked Dr. Presley if he remembered Jules Reiver or Emanuel Taylor being at the sale, two other early dollar specialists active at that time.*] No one there of course knew me and probably thought I was crazy for the prices I paid. You will enjoy the prices in the book.

Per his record book, Dr. Presley sold most of his early dollars privately in 1970. He broke even on most of them (not bad considering he'd only owned them 2 years or so). He did exceptionally well on one coin, the 1795 B-7 Dollar in Mint State which he had paid \$1,800 for in the Merkin '68 Sale. He sold this for \$5,856.00, more than triple what he had paid for it 2 years earlier.

For years I kept in touch with Dr. Presley. He had a brother in Denver, and we had arranged to get together the next time he visited Denver. Dr. Presley took ill, and sometime after that he passed away. I never got to meet him in person. Dr. Presley's wife called me in January 2002 to let me know that he had passed away. I sent her a letter dated January 22, 2002 thanking her for the call and letting her know how much I'd enjoyed my letters and conversations with him. I also noted,

Were he alive today, he would be surprised (or shocked) to learn that one of the 1795 silver dollars he bought in the Lester Merkin sale of September 18, 1968 just sold for \$161,000!

As you can see from the above Dr. Joseph A. Presley was the source of the neat wooden box I have on my desk. I think about him whenever I look at the box, and all the great items my conversations and relationship with him have led me to over the years. All from a mistaken \$77.00 auction lot purchased in 1995.



Photo of Dr. Joseph A. Presley

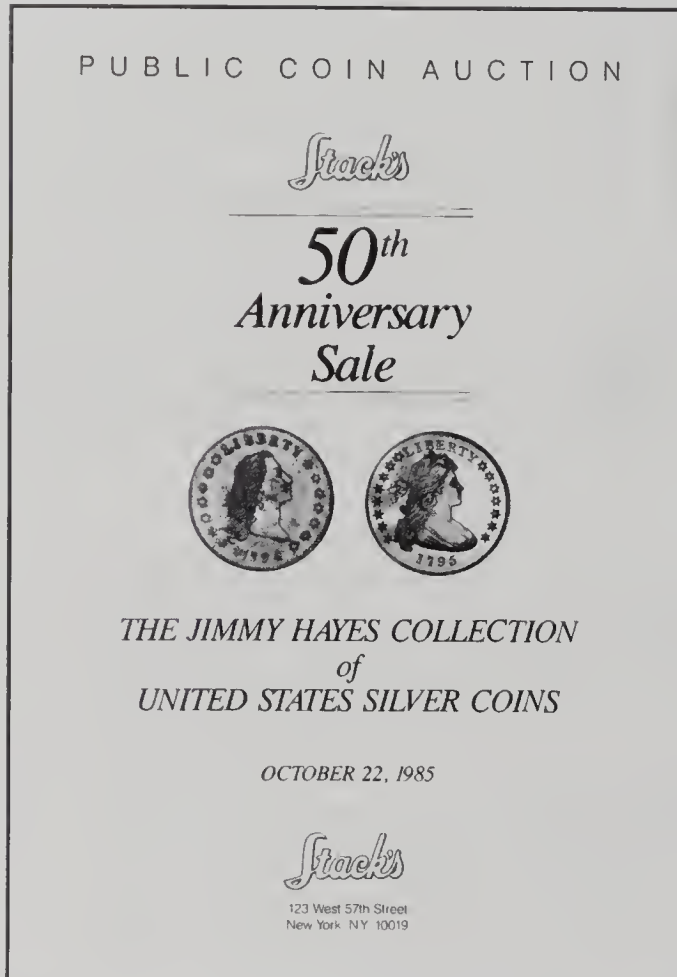
LESTER MERKIN COINS, INC.
65 East 56th Street • New York, N. Y. 10022
PLaza 3-1130

JAP

SOLD TO Dr. Joe A. Presley
ADDRESS 3087 E. Lake Shore Dr.
Baton Rouge La. 70808

LOT #	PRICE	LOT #	PRICE	LOT #	PRICE
95 ¹³³ 226	1250.-	302 ¹⁸⁰⁰	230.-		
95 ¹³⁴ 227	400.-	302 ¹⁸⁰⁰	320.-		
95 ¹³⁶ 229	600.-	303 ¹⁸⁰⁰	300.-		
95 ¹³⁷ 230	1800.-		10,050.-		
95 ¹³⁸ 231	1350.-				
95 ¹³⁹ 233	500.-				
95 ¹⁴⁰ 234	2000.-				
98 ¹⁴¹ 256	330.-				
98 ¹⁴² 258	290.-				
98 ¹⁴³ 271	250.-				
99 ¹⁴⁴ 278	210.-				
99 ¹⁴⁵ 281	220.-				10,050.-
		% SALES TAX			
(Bill Postmail)		POSTAGE & HANDLING			
PURCHASED BY		<i>Joe A. Presley m 5</i>			

Dr. Presley's invoice from the September 18, 1968 Lester Merkin Sale. This invoice was included as part of Lot 2093 in The Armand Champa Library Sale Part Three.

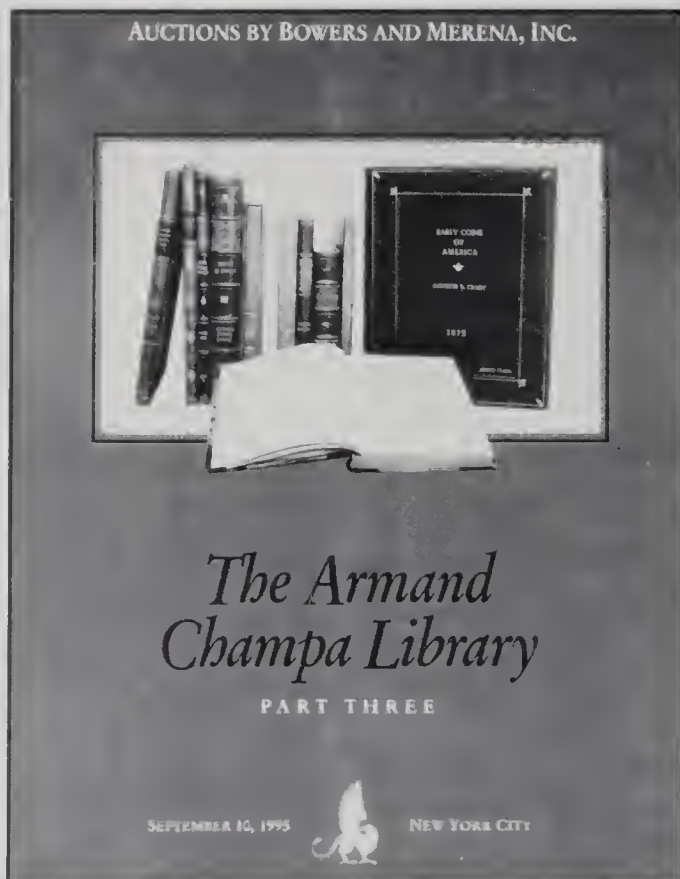


Stack's 50th Anniversary Sale Catalog cover, the sale of The Jimmy Hayes Collection of United States Silver Coins.

The sale was held on October 22, 1985. The coins were stunning!

The 1794 Flowing Hair silver dollar is one of the two Lord St. Oswald specimens and was purchased in London by Mrs. Ostheimer, who attended the 1964 Christies sale specifically to acquire this Specimen.

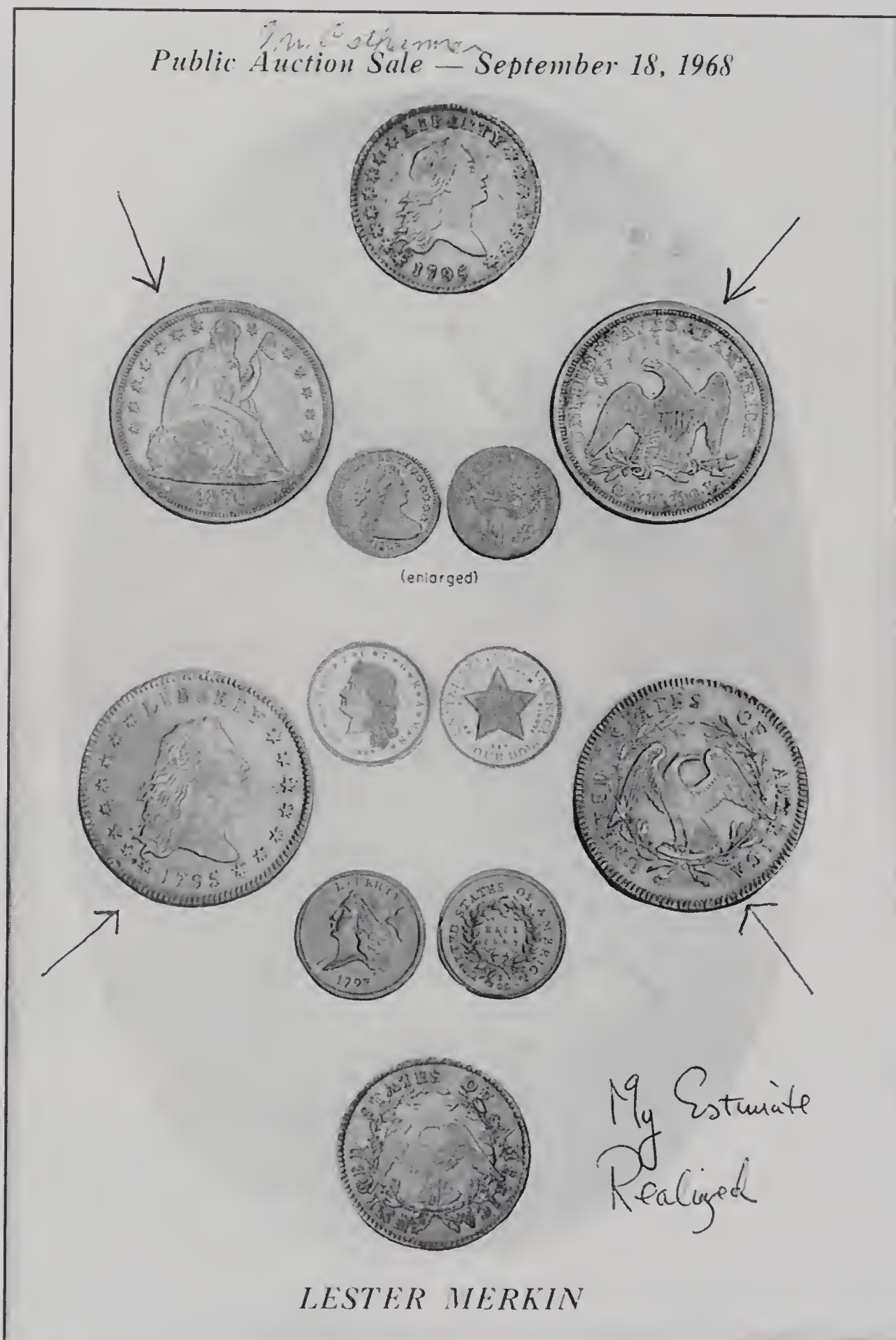
The 1795 Draped Bust Dollar is ex: J. Colvin Randall.



The Armand Champa Library Sale Part Three was held on September 10, 1995 in New York City.



Obverse and Reverse of the 1795 B-19, BB-19 Dollar from the Stirling Collection. This is the Discovery Specimen and is the only specimen known to me. This specimen has a silver plug center, unknown to numismatists at the time it was discovered by me and a grandson of Frank M. Stirling while I was appraising the collection in 2005.



Ostheimer's copy of the September 18, 1968 Lester Merkin Sale. Dr. Presley attended this sale in person and acquired a number of early silver dollars from the Ostheimer Collection from this sale (see photo of invoice for specific lots).



1795 B-6, BB-25 silver dollar; the reverse with three leaves under the first S in STATES vs. the four leaves normally seen. This is the Discovery Specimen from the Stirling Collection. Photo courtesy of John Dannreuther and PCGS.



Reverse of the 1795 B-6, BB-25 silver dollar with the normally seen four leaves under the first S in STATES. The fourth leaf was added after the original die had been hardened and used to strike dollars of the 1795 B-6, BB-25 die marriage (with only 3 leaves under the first S in STATES). Photo courtesy of the Goldberg's.



Wooden box with photos of early dollars from the Merkin '68 Sale purchased by Dr. Presley decopaged onto the top.

The Mint

Bradley Higgins

THE MINT.

The new Mint appears to be a favorite place of resort for the curious among our fellow citizens. Visitors pass in by the Chesnut-street front, at all hours of the morning, and are at once ushered into a beautiful and capacious building, well adapted for the important purposes for which it was erected. When we look round its ample dimensions we wonder how it was possible to accommodate so extensive a business as was done in the miserable confined apartments of the old coming house in Seventh street, and fail not, at the same time, to admire the neat and simple beauty of the present building. The first object which attracts the attention on entering, is a huge steam engine, at the opposite end of the building; the noise of which added to the incessant jarring of the dies, gives token of the laborious purpose to which it is applied. This engine, of thirty horse power, is the most highly finished specimen of the steam engine, we have ever witnessed. The shafts, upright and horizontal, arc of polished metal, and most of the cog-wheels are of brass. The huge fly-wheels run with the precision of a watch-wheel, while the various and totally different purposes to which its power is applied, strike the beholder with admiration of the skill and ingenuity of the machinist. Rush and Muhlenburg, of this city, constructed this engine; its cost was about eight thousand dollars.

From the hot rooms in which the bullion is converted into ingots, we entered the rooms where the ingots are passed through a succession of steel rollers, until they assume the flatness and thickness of a common iron hoop. Thence we

ascended into a room where these thin bars are passed through a steel gauge, to give them a uniform thickness, equal to that of the half-dollar. A punch, worked by the same engine, cuts out the silver of a proper size; the scraps of silver are melted over again into ingots. From this room the prepared bits are taken down into the die room, where they are passed on their edges, through a machine which gives them the impression they bear upon the edge. They are thence handed over to the coiners, by whom they are placed in a tube, in a pile a foot high, whence they drop, one at a time, on a slide which conveys them directly to the dies. Here they receive the proper impression on each side, from dies forced together by means of an iron bar, ten or twelve feet long, worked horizontally by three men. The instant the coin receives its proper impression, it is forced off the die into a box ready to receive it, and gives place to another, which immediately occupies the same position, and undergoes the same operation.

After having gone through the whole establishment, the impression left upon the mind is that of astonishment and wonder, that an end of such immense importance as the supply of coin for a whole nation, can be attained by means apparently so simple, and of such ready comprehension. The spectator, going through alone, needs no one to explain this or that operation.—Every thing explains itself on the instant; for every thing is free from mystery or concealment, and the extreme politeness to strangers, manifested by every person about it, materially enhances the pleasure of a visit to the Mint of the United States.—*Saturday Evening Post.*

Clip of an article from the New York Weekly Messenger and Young Mens' Advocate, 8/28/1833, earlier in the Saturday Evening Post.

NOTES:

1. Despite the detailed level of observation, there is no mention of anything which may be construed as a collar. How telling is this?
2. This is the first mention I can recall of "the incessant jarring of the dies". Three strong men swinging ten foot levers has to cause substantial impact noise.
3. Note the movement of the edged planchets directly to the coiners. This is why in all the years of studying edges, Leaman and Gunnet found only a single coin with an edge that was out of sequence (1814 O.103)

Bust Dime Census

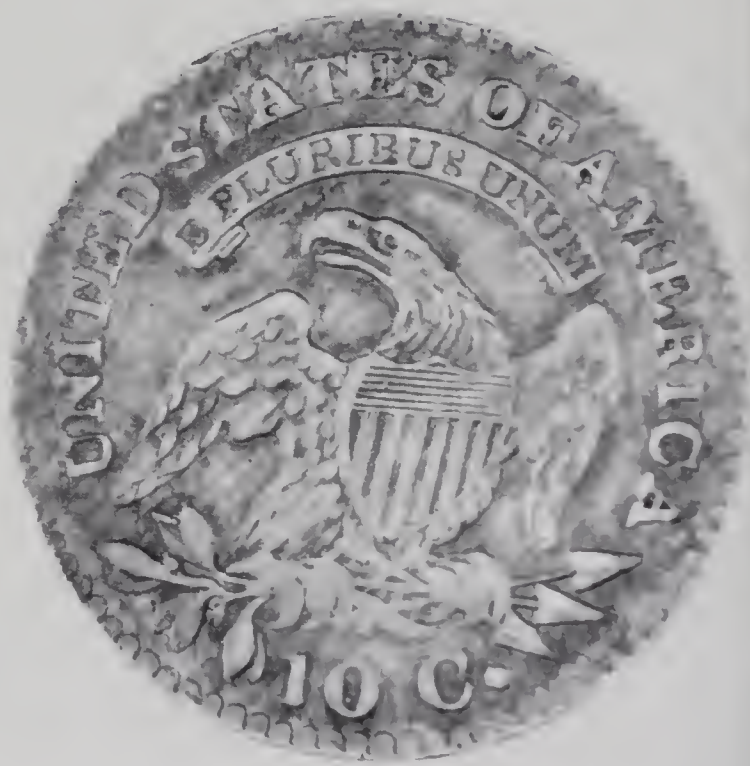
By David Quint

Welcome to the 2011 Bust Dime Census. Our last Census (*see JRJ 19/3, March 2009*) was the third in a row compiled and written by Charles Horning (who took over for the late Russ Logan) and a debt of gratitude is owed Dr. Horning for maintaining and improving the census for this series for almost a decade.

New Capped Bust Dime Variety

Since the publication of *Early United States Dimes 1796 - 1837* ("EUSD") in 1984 there have been two new Draped Bust dime varieties discovered, bringing the total to 31 - the 1796 JR-7, discovered by Brian Greer, which is a marriage of a newly discovered obverse die and Reverse D and for which only one example has been found, and the 1803 JR-5, discovered by Ed Price, which is a marriage of newly discovered obverse and reverse dies and for which four examples are known to date (*see JRJ 7/3, April 1993*). Until 2011 there had not been a single new Capped Bust dime variety discovered to add to the 122 identified by the EUSD authors.

This year Brad Karoleff announced the authentication (together with John McCloskey and Kirk Gorman) of a new variety discovered by an anonymous collector (*see JRJ 21/1, February 2011, 1827 JR-14 Bust Dime Confirmed*). The 1827 JR-14 (unique thus far) is a marriage of the 1827 Obverse 1 and Reverse B, and the authors present a compelling case that the emission order of the dies indicates that the coin was struck after the 1827 JR-1 but before the 1827 JR-2. The following illustrations are copyrighted images courtesy of *CoinWorld*.



Census and Changes to Rarity Ratings

With the growth in the availability of information owing to this journal, to ebay, and to almost 30 years of post-EUSD auction catalogs, we have a tremendous informational advantage over the original authors of the book in terms of determining rarity. While with the rarer varieties it is possible to approximate the actual populations of surviving examples, as we go down the rarity scale (from 8 to 1) we have to rely more on the relative rarity observed by active collectors between various varieties. We are making a number of changes in rarity ratings at this time:

- 1) **1809 JR-1 from R4 to R3**
- 2) **1823 JR-1 from R3 to R2**
- 3) **1824 JR-1 from R3 to R2**
- 4) **1829 JR-8 from R4 to R4+**
- 5) **1829 JR-11 from R4 to R4+**
- 6) **1833 JR-4 from R1 to R2**
- 7) **1835 JR-7 from R5 to R4**

These seven varieties were selected out of a total of 16 varieties nominated for either increases or decreases in rarity ratings (polled specialists were Jim Koenings, Kirk Gorman, Mike Sherrill, Louis Scuderi, and Charlie Horning). The 1809 and 1824 dimes are of particular interest as these were essentially single-variety years (the exceedingly rare 1824 JR-2 represents probably less than 5% of extant 1824 dimes); thus while the downgrades to R3 and to R2, respectively, indicate that the varieties are more common than originally thought, as dates these are still scarce.

The Draped Bust Dime Census for 2011 is presented in Table 1, with the Capped Bust following in Table 2. The Capped Bust census is also presented by grade in Table 3. The collecting of bust dimes continues to gain popularity, as evidenced by a quick review of prior Capped Bust censuses (starting with Census #2 from July, 1992). Each year, approximately 15 Capped Bust collections have been featured, ranked by number of varieties owned; the 15th-best collections over the years have boasted 43 ('92), 60 ('96), 64 ('03), 86 ('06), 104 ('09), and 108 ('11) varieties. In the present census we had a total of 15 submissions of Draped Bust collections (though some of just one or two coins) and 34 submissions of Capped Bust collections.

Finest Known by Variety

The authors of EUSD presented for each variety the finest known example they had examined or heard about. While this information is now over 27 years old, often this “finest known” data is quoted by dealers and auction houses when describing high grade dimes and estimating which coins belong in the Condition Census. Since for most varieties (but not all!) there have been subsequent discoveries of finer coins, most often these dealer claims result in an exaggeration of their coin’s place in the Condition Census. The information in the Draped Bust chart (Table 4) comes exclusively from a combination of Ed Price’s commentary in the Heritage sale of his collection (August 2008), Heritage auction records, and Stack’s Bowers auction records. In compiling the chart (Table 5) for the Capped Bust Dimes, I relied on notes compiled from virtually all auction sales and personal observations since 1984, and notes from Russ Logan and other collectors. The grades shown are generally the NGC and PCGS grades. While I am aware that reliance on the grading houses is fraught with issues, including systematic grade inflation over the years, it is for better or worse the only means I have for all those coins I haven’t personally seen. There are some instances of the original finest known grades actually declining on some dimes as today’s more technical approach to grading has resulted in the downgrade of some of the dimes memorialized in EUSD. For the Capped Bust series, the average grade of the finest known coins today is 64.4, indicating the maximum (known) achievable average grade for the series of 123 dimes, while the EUSD authors in 1984 claimed an average finest known grade of 58.9 across 122 varieties. The (archived) Lovejoy and Logan collections claimed average grades of 57 and 47 while the finest collections in this census average 60, 50, and 47 (all complete except for the 1827 JR-14). Taking the finest submissions for each variety amongst all participants in the 2011 Census yields a collection with an average grade of 62.7, less than 2 points below a collection of the finest known of the series.

Update on Proof Capped Bust Dimes

The identification and confirmation of proof early dimes is always a difficult task. The authors of EUSD discussed both specific, confirmed examples of varieties struck for presentation purposes as well as rumors of such coins. While there are examples of proof-like and semi-proof-like Draped Bust Small and Heraldic Eagle dimes, there are no known coins with claims to full proof status. The Capped Bust series boasts 27 distinct varieties in proofholders from 16 different dates.

1820 – Despite the authors’ claim that Walter Breen had seen proofs of the JR-8 and JR-13 varieties, there has only been one proof coin that has actually been sold at auction. A gem JR-7 that sold in Stack’s James T. Stack sale, 1/90:23 and later Superior 2/08:488 is now in an NGC66 holder.

1821 – A JR-7 described as MS64 in the Eliasberg sale (lot 1067) later was seen in an NGC Proof-62 holder; a different, finer example can be seen in Superior 2/08:489. Additionally, EUSD identified a Proof-65 JR-9 in the Garrett collection, and both the Lovejoy (“Very Choice Proof”) and Eliasberg (Proof-66, later PCGS Proof-65) sales had JR-9’s.

1822 – there are several fully proof-like coins extant, and a few auction appearances of coins described as proofs. Finest known is in a PCGS Proof-66 holder.

1823 – despite the 1954 appearance (noted in EUSD) of a coin described as “proof”, there have not been any known examples of proof 1823 dimes confirmed to date.

1824 – the Proof-67 coin discussed in the Dime Book is still the finest known (described as a Proof-65 when sold as part of the Lovejoy collection and now in an NGC Proof-67 holder).

1825 – The authors of EUSD reported hearing of proofs for the JR-2 and JR-4 varieties, but it is the JR-2 and JR-1 varieties that have produced claimed examples since the book was published. A single JR-1 proof, in 63, was Stack’s 1/90:1624. At least six individual JR-2s have sold at auction, including one as a PCGS Proof-66 and another as an NGC Proof-67.

1827 – The 1827 JR-10, presumably a proof-only issue, boasted only one known example at the time of the writing of EUSD. Since then, we’ve seen no fewer than 10 distinct examples in the marketplace, including at least 5 coins in various circulated conditions. In the census that follows we have only 6 examples submitted ranging in grade from G-6 to Proof-65; as a testament to both the rarity and high market value of this variety, no other variety (except the new 1827 JR-14) has anywhere close to as few submissions as the 1827 JR-10. The finest known continues to be the coin described as Proof-67 from Stack’s 1981 Bareford Sale (where it sold for \$29,000, later selling as part of the Lovejoy collection in 1990 for \$93,500, and most recently in Superior’s Turtle Rock Collection sale of 2008 where it fetched \$120,750). The 1827 JR-12 has multiple coins with fully proof-like surfaces, and at least two coins have been slabbed as full proofs (one was Lot 558 in the Pittman sale, described as “Gem Proof” but years later seen in an NGC-65 (regular strike) holder, and the other is in an NGC Proof-64 holder).

1828 – There have been many proof-like mint state examples seen of the JR-1 variety, as well as a handful of proofs. The Eliasberg and Lovejoy collections each had an example (two different coins) and there have been at least two others appearing in auctions. The author has not seen nor heard of any appearance of the Proof-67 described in EUSD; thus the NGC Proof-65 appearing as Superior 2/08:492 would be my choice as finest known.

1829 – Despite the claim in EUSD that JR-1 proofs may exist, none have been seen in the intervening years. There have been a few appearances of the JR-3 in Proof (the finest being a Proof-64). The JR-4 claims two known proofs – one was in the Eliasberg collection described as Proof-64 and the other was in the 1973 Reed Hawn sale, described as “Brilliant Proof”. Lastly, the JR-7 exists in proof format, with at least 3 distinct examples known (the finest is likely the Eliasberg example now in a PCGS Proof-66 holder).

1830 – EUSD mentions a Proof-65 example of the JR-4, which was later sold in an NGC Proof-64 slab as part of the Lovejoy collection. At least two others exist, of a lesser grade. The JR-6 is a relatively common proof bust dime, with at least half a dozen specimens known, the finest two being described as Proof-66 in at least one sale.

1831 – The 1831 JR-2 is an odd variety in that while only 3 or 4 coins are known in mint state, over 10 distinct examples are known to exist in proof format (with at least two in 66 holders and one a true Proof-67 in an NGC Proof-67 holder). The JR-4 Robison example in Proof-63 discussed in the Dime Book (later in the Lovejoy sale) is the only proof 1831 dime to appear at auction outside of the JR-2s noted above (though in Superior’s sale of May 2003 Lot 2357 is described as “Brilliant Proof-62 ... more than a little prooflike frost on the reverse... Inspection recommended.”).

1832 – There was only one known proof 1832 dime in 1984, and there is only one known today. The Proof-65 JR-2 listed in the dime book (and serving as the plate coin), later sold as part of the Lovejoy collection. No other examples even claiming proof status have been sold at auction since then.

1833 – There are at least a couple of proof examples, all from the JR-2 variety. One of these is likely the coin that Walter Breen claimed to have seen (as mentioned in EUSD) with an Obverse 4, as Obverse 2 and 4 are quite similar. There is one coin that was in the Pittman and Benson collections (currently in an NGC Proof-66 holder) and another in a PCGS Proof-66 holder. Neither coin displays the second obverse crack (from S1 through the throat) typically seen on the JR-2, indicating an early die state.

1834 – The EUSD authors mentioned proofs of varieties 1, 6, and 7. There have also been multiple proofs identified of the JR-5 variety. While proofs of the JR-1, JR-5, and JR-7 are relatively plentiful (at least 3 examples are reported for each), we’ve only seen two coins claiming proof status of the JR-6 variety, and at least one is suspect as a proof based on a specialist’s examination. The finest known of each variety are all Proof-65.

1835 – Not much new to report here. While the 1835 dime is by far the most common bust dime in general, the only variety known to date in proof format is still the JR-4. The authors reported three proofs (including one in Proof-70, illustrating that not all grading has gotten more liberal over the years), though many of the best coin collections have boasted an 1835 proof dime (including James A. Stack Sr., Lovejoy, Norweb, Robison, Eliasberg, and Reed Hawn). The finest known today is a PCGS Proof-67 (see Heritage 1/07:870).

1836 – There are two known 1836 proof dimes, neither of which has seen the light of public auction for decades. The finest is the Norweb/Lovejoy example, last seen in an NGC Proof-64 holder. Another is Lot 162 from Heritage’s 1990 ANA sale, described as Proof-60 but “less than fully struck”.

1837 – There is only one JR-2 example even rumored to be in proof format. This is the coin listed in the dime book from Auction’82 in Proof-63. More recently we saw this same coin in an NGC “MS-64 Specimen” holder (Heritage 4/10:2055). The EUSD plate coin for the JR-3 variety is the Proof-65 coin mentioned in the book and later sold as part of the Lovejoy collection. I have not seen this coin since. While there are dozens of proof 1837 Liberty Seated dimes, the 1837 proof bust dime is extremely rare.

In all, there are 26 known varieties of proof capped bust dimes (with the obvious caveat that many early American coins that appear to be proofs are in actuality well-struck coins from newly polished dies).

Copies of the Dime Book Available

Any collectors interested in the early dimes but having difficulty finding an original copy of the “dime book” *Early United States Dimes*, I would be happy to send you a quality photocopy (in exchange for a \$20 donation to JRCS). Email me at [*dimecensus@yahoo.com*](mailto:dimecensus@yahoo.com) for further information.

Draped Bust Dime Census

Table 1

Year	JR#	Rarity	622	LM13	1355	048	1386	510	1301	869	RPD	AVG	MAX
1796	1	3	15					2	63	6	6	25	63
	2	4				4					2	25	45
	3	5	30				12				2	21	30
	4	4											
	5	5		45							2	44	45
	6	3											
	7	8									1	2	2
1797	1	4	4	50							2	27	50
	2	4	20		10	4	30	3	58		6	21	58
1798	1	3			10			8	63		4	21	63
	2	6	3	45		3					3	17	45
	3	5			15						1	15	15
	4	3	40	6	12	8	20		58		6	24	58
1800	1	4	30		25						3	36	53
	2	5			12	2	10	3			4	7	12
1801	1	4	30	3	8						3	14	30
	2	5	30			3	10	3		4	5	10	30
1802	1	8									1	45	45
	2	5		45	40		8				3	31	45
	3	6		45							1	45	45
	4	4	30	8		4		4	40		5	17	40
1803	1	7	4	40							2	22	40
	2	6	30	53							3	42	53
	3	4		55		3	20				3	26	55
	4	5	12	58	40						3	37	58
	5	7	6	25							2	16	25
1804	1	5				3					1	3	3
	2	5					8	3			3	4	8
1805	1	3	6		55	3		8		25	6	17	55
	2	2	30		53	2	20	10		15	9	25	58
1807	1	2	10		15	3	30	12		25	8	13	30
			622	LM13	1355	048	1386	510	1301	869	31 KNOWN		
Varieties Owned			17	13	12	12	10	10	5	5		DIE	
Average Grade			19	37	25	4	17	6	56	15	MARRIAGES		

Capped Bust Dime Census

Table 2

Year	JR#	Rarity	LM32	960	001	622	LM56A	LM56B	578	1050	002	323	238	510	048	1212	1006	RPD	AVG	MAX
1809	1	3	58	40	50	30	45	6	25	45	15	10	8	30	3	10	50	34	28	64
1811	1	3	58	30	40	30	45	15	53	30	25	20	12	3	40	20	58	35	26	58
1814	1	3	65	58	40	30	30	12	35	45	30	8	40	15	8	25		29	28	65
	2	3	64	55	40	45	40	30	20	40	40	10	40	50	6	15	12	25	30	64
	3	2	45	58	55	30	55	12	45	45	40	40	8	15	2	20	50	31	32	58
	4	2	67	40	30	40	50	8	55	25	40	25	12	12	12		40	29	32	67
	5	3	40	50	45	50	30	30	53	30	40	30	10	25	3	12	40	25	28	55
1820	1	4	25	55	40	35	55	40	30	20	40	20	6	12	6		40	27	29	63
	2	3	64	55	50	60	50	18	45	50	25	45	8	10	10	20	25	29	31	64
	3	4	64	45	40	58	30	12	50	40	40	6	30	12	6	15	20	23	28	64
	4	5	65	30	45	50	30	10	20	30	40	40	12	12	10		10	21	25	65
	5	4	64	30	45	45	55	30	20	30	25	12	8	8	4	45	20	24	26	64
	6	3	64	55	40	58	35	15	58	35	40	4	12	25	4	35	25	25	30	64
	7	2	64	62	55	50	35	8	35	50	25	35	8	30	3	30	20	25	33	64
	8	3	64	58	50	55	50	25	55	30	25	8	20	10	10	30	35	23	33	64
	9	4	53	30	25	45	30	12	55	12	25	8	12	25	10		20	20	26	55
	10	3	35	50	20	45	25	12	62	55	40	20	10	12	4	25	20	25	27	62
	11	3	66	58	45	50	35	20	53	40	25	50	12	6	20	25	30	26	32	66
	12	6	60	50	12	12	45	30	20	20	45	12	6		30			15	28	60
	13	3	64	50	55	50	30	12	20	45	40	12	30	15	4	25	15	20	31	64
1821	1	2	64	50	40	35	30	12	25	45	25	45	10	12	15	25	40	26	31	64
	2	6+	20	4	25	30	20	12	6	8	20	4	6	10	8	10		16	12	30
	3	4	60	25	50	30	35	30	25	25	25	12	8	15	8	20	25	26	25	60
	4	2	64	50	55	50	45	8	58	20	40	30	25	10	6	30	45	25	32	64
	5	3	66	55	40	60	35	20	50	20	25	45	20	30	20	45	20	26	33	66
	6	2	62	58	50	20	15	4	58	30	20	6	8	12	3	45	30	28	26	62
	7	2	40	62	45	20	15	12	50	45	25	30	30	40	6	15	30	26	28	64
	8	2	67	58	55	50	30	8	55	30	25	20	12	10	20	30	25	27	34	67
	9	2	66	50	50	50	10	8	30	25	15	15	20	30	8	20	45	22	27	66
	10	4+	64	61	50	25	25	15	40	30	25	4	12	8	11	12	12	20	28	64
1822	1	4	64	6	50	20	50	18	20	12	25	4	8	30	3	10	12	24	18	64
1823	1	2	65	50	50	50	40	12	58	45	40	8	15	12	12	20	30	24	32	65
	2	5-	25	58	60	45	55	35	30	40	25	8	8	10	6	30	10	27	24	60
	3	2	55	53	50	20	40	6	40	30	40	6	8	35	15	12	40	33	29	64
1824	1	2	64	50	45	40	50	30	58	30	40	8	4	10	61	25	40	29	30	64
	2	5+	35	25	20	8	10	3	18	30	45	8	4	7	6			15	18	45
1825	1	4	65	58	50	55	25	20	58	58	25	10	8	6	8	15	12	23	29	65
	2	2	64	55	40	35	55	40	55	30	25	10	30	10	15	40	30	31	29	64
	3	4	62	40	45	40	30	15	50	30	25	15	15	6	35	20	12	21	28	62
	4	3-	62	55	40	55	35	12	50	40	50	10	8	25	8	45	30	25	29	62
	5	5	66	64	45	45	58	35	50	53	40	30	4	8	12	12	12	29	27	66

Table 2 (Cont'd.)

Year	JR#	Rarity	LM32	960	001	622	LM56A	LM56B	578	1050	002	323	238	510	048	1212	1006	RPD	AVG	MAX
1827	1	3	61	53	60	30	50	15	12	30	25	6	55	20	10	45	15	21	31	64
	2	5+	12	12	30	30	45	30	20	50	40	15	4	6	10	12	4	25	18	50
	3	1	45	55	45	20	25	4	58	20	40	60	12	8	12	25	30	19	32	60
	4	2	66	50	45	45	12	12	53	35	40	30	12	12		25	12	22	34	66
	5	3	66	53	35	45	58	45	40	40	40	10	8	15	8	12	20	30	28	66
	6	2	65	45	45	20	50	18	53	40	40	40	12	10	12	30	58	25	33	65
	7	3	64	62	50	58	40	12	55	50	40	30	10	20	4	15	30	24	32	64
	8	4	63	40	45	58	30	10	63	40	25	30	12	30	5	35	15	21	32	63
	9	4+	58	40	30	40	35	20	58	50	40	15	6	8	15	30	15	27	26	58
	10	6+	65	10	40	30	6	6										6	26	65
	11	2	64	58	50	40	30	18	62	20	25	20	10	25	4	30	40	24	29	64
	12	1	58	55	45	45	12	8	62	40	25	6	12	8	6	25	12	23	26	62
	13	3	65	58	45	40	25	20	55	40	25	25	10	20	3	35	50	25	30	65
	14	8																1	35	35
1828	1	2	64	55	60	45	35	15	58	25	25	40	12	15	20	45	55	30	33	64
	2	3	63	55	50	40	45	15	55	30	25	4	15	15	4	25	15	31	27	63
1829	1	4+	63	62	45	55	55	12	62	30	40	4	40	30	12	53	40	21	36	63
	2	2	65	55	60	50	30	20	50	20	25	6	12	12	8	45		20	31	65
	3	4	65	50	50	40	50	4	53	30	25	20	25	30	7	55	30	27	37	65
	4	2	64	58	60	40	40	20	62	45	25	50	20	40	10	40	45	23	36	64
	5	4	45	53	50	55	55	20	50	45	40	50	4		15	50	15	17	40	55
	6	3	64	45	55	40	45	20	40	35	50	45	12	12	15		30	19	39	65
	7	1	64	55	60	35	30	25	58	25	45	40	15	35		20	45	27	37	64
	8	4+	45	45	50	45	30	15	40	20	45	15	4	10	20	35	40	18	31	50
	9	4	64	35	60	35	35	12	61	40	40	50	6	6	8	25	10	24	29	64
	10	5+	8	4	12	6	8	6	10	6	15	10	4					12	10	35
	11	4+	63	45	60	58	50	40	20	50	25	8	25	6	8	40	10	24	30	63
	12	3	66	58	50	45	20	8	58	20	40	10	50	15	6	30	30	20	31	66
1830	1	4+	45	25	10	30	50	45	18	12	25	12	10		6	15		46	16	50
	2	1	64	53	40	45	40	8	62	20	45	62	40	10	10	45	40	24	36	64
	3	3	64	58	40	40	45	25	50	45	50	30	30	12	6	20		28	29	64
	4	2	64	61	55	50	55	45	55	50	50	15	45	40	8	35	50	26	36	64
	5	2	65	58	40	40	30	30	63	35	45	40	30	25	6	12	25	22	37	65
	6	2	64	55	45	55	40	12	62	50	40	30	12	10	4	62	30	22	38	64
	7	4	63	40	50	30	35	30	20	50	40	35	10	40	20	45	30	24	31	63
	8	3	64	63	40	50	30	10	62	40	40	8	40	25	6	40	45	25	35	64
1831	1	1	65	50	50	55	30	20	61	30	40	8	8	20	35	30	45	24	33	65
	2	3	65	55	60	45	12	10	55	30	25	45	55	12	7	30		16	35	65
	3	1	67	63	45	55	12	6	40	30	25	12	30	20	10	25	40	29	30	67
	4	2	64	58	45	45	25	25	55	55	40	40	20	12	4	40	53	20	41	64
	5	1	65	55	50	30	55	50	62	45	40	35	30	15	4	35	45	30	37	66
	6	3	65	55	50	45	50	20	55	30	40	40	15	12	20	30	12	21	35	65

Table 2 (Cont'd.)

Year	JR#	Rarity	LM32	960	001	622	LM56A	LM56B	578	1050	002	323	238	510	048	1212	1006			
1832	1	2	66	62	60	30	45	15	15	50	25	8	8	10	10	40	55	23	32	66
	2	2	65	63	45	40	45	20	58	40	40	45	10	10	12	25	45	27	37	65
	3	4	64	55	40	50	58	45	10	40	40	20	20	6	12	25	15	32	25	64
	4	3	65	58	45	30	12	10	58	50	25	40	8	40	3	20	50	22	32	65
	5	2	64	55	60	55	15	12	55	40	50	53	12	15	10	30	40	20	37	65
	6	3	65	50	55	55	35	8	45	20	40	30	55	12	10	35	45	20	37	65
	7	3	66	53	45	50	45	15	62	50	40	40	45	25	4	40	55	24	40	66
1833	1	3	65	62	40	30	35	12	50	25	40	30	12	15	15	35	30	23	34	65
	2	5	63	40	60	50	45	20	25	58	8	8	20	8	20		20	23	29	63
	3	6	63	35	60	45	10	10	53	6	20	15	15	20		55		18	30	63
	4	2	66	55	58	35	12	12	63	48	40	50	12	12	8	55	53	28	28	66
	5	1	58	58	45	45	20	15	61	20	25	50	15	15	4	40	55	24	36	61
	6	1	65	58	40	55	12	12	63	40	25	10	10	20	12	55	50	22	34	65
	7	5	58	63	25	40	25	12	61	6	40	15	20	8	8	15	8	26	23	63
	8	5	64	35	60	50	55	30	58	40	40	12	45	12	58	35	25	28	35	64
	9	2	65	55	60	45	20	15	45	25	40	10	10	20	10	25	50	24	32	65
	10	3	64	55	60	40	30	20	55	40	40	10	15	30	9	25	30	20	37	64
1834	1	1	68	55	55	45	45	8	58	40	25	40	15	8	4	35	53	22	35	68
	2	3	65	62	50	50	35	30	63	20	40	40	30	40	10	30	45	28	34	65
	3	5	58	55	40	40	50	30	40	40	8	35	8	10	10	53		28	22	58
	4	3	66	53	45	20	58	15	62	53	40	30	12	30	30	12	25	29	32	66
	5	1	65	50	45	45	20	10	63	40	40	10	12	20	6	30	58	25	38	65
	6	2	65	55	60	63	40	35	62	30	40	45	12	20	15	30	30	31	33	65
	7	2	67	63	60	58	40	6	55	20	40	20	45	30	12	20	50	24	36	67
1835	1	1	65	61	55	50	12	8	58	40	25	30	12	10	10	58	55	23	32	65
	2	4	66	63	50	55	40	12	50	15	40	15	20	25	30	61	40	26	41	66
	3	2	65	58	45	62	35	6	50	40	40	35	8	15	4	53	53	26	39	65
	4	2	65	45	60	55	50	15	55	40	40	20	10	40	10	20	25	22	34	65
	5	1	65	58	50	55	18	10	45	30	40	20	10	30	4	25	40	23	36	65
	6	4	64	50	40	55	45	30	18	53	40	6	8	8	4	20	62	22	32	64
	7	4	60	58	55	45	45	35	20	30	40	25	20	12	10	55	55	27	30	60
	8	3	65	45	55	50	12	12	40	20	25	8	8	20	10	50		21	33	65
	9	2	64	55	45	50	12	12	62	40	25	45	8	15	5	25	58	26	38	64
1836	1	3	65	58	45	20	35	10	62	40	25	35	8	25	15	20	45	31	36	65
	2	2	66	55	45	45	45	10	58	30	40	58	15	30	6	30	53	23	42	66
	3	3	64	58	45	55	40	12	62	20	25	50	12	15	10	30	30	29	37	65
1837	1	4	64	35	30	62	55	45	62	30	50	4	12	15	10	50	62	27	34	64
	2	3	64	58	60	58	30	4	50	20	25	15	20	10	9	20		23	35	65
	3	2	66	50	45	40	20	8	40	40	40	8	20	25	12	30	50	25	35	66
	4	1	66	58	45	30	25	6	63	50	25	12	12	35	15	20	45	23	33	66
			LM32	960	001	622	LM56A	LM56B	578	1050	002	323	238	510	048	1212	1006	123 KNOWN		
Varieties Owned			122	122	122	122	122	122	121	121	121	121	121	117	117	112	108		DIE	
Average Grade			60	50	46	43	35	18	47	34	34	24	17	18	11	30	34	MARRIAGES		

Table 3 - Capped Bust Dime Census by Grade

Year	JR #	Rarity	AG/G	VG	F	VF	XF	AU	UNC	TOTAL
1809	1	3	6	5	3	7	6	6	1	34
1811	1	3	5	2	6	11	8	3		35
1814	1	3	3	4	5	8	3	4	2	29
	2	3	3	1	5	3	9	3	1	25
	3	2	3	1	5	8	7	7		31
	4	2		3	4	10	6	4	2	29
	5	3	2	2	4	9	4	4		25
1820	1	4	2	1	6	9	4	3	2	27
	2	3		3	6	8	5	5	2	29
	3	4	3	1	6	5	4	3	1	23
	4	5	2	4	3	7	3	1	1	21
	5	4	2	2	5	8	4	2	1	24
	6	3	3	1	5	7	4	4	1	25
	7	2	1	3	2	9	4	4	2	25
	8	3		4	3	7	1	7	1	23
	9	4	1	3	3	8	3	2		20
	10	3	2	3	4	8	4	3	1	25
	11	3	2	2	3	9	3	5	2	26
	12	6	1	1	3	5	2	2	1	15
1821	13	3	1		6	4	5	3	1	20
	1	2	1	4	4	6	7	2	2	26
	2	6+	5	4	2	5				16
	3		2	2	5	12	2	2	1	26
	4	2	2	2	2	9	3	6	1	25
	5	3		1	5	10	3	5	2	26
	6	2	4	4	5	7	2	5	1	28
	7	2	1	2	6	9	5	1	2	26
	8	2	1	2	4	9	1	8	2	27
	9	2		4	6	6	2	3	1	22
	10	4+	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	20
1822	1		7	4	4	6		2	1	24
1823	1	2		2	7	4	3	7	1	24
	2	5-	4	7	3	5	4	3	1	27
	3	2	4	2	6	7	8	5	1	33
1824	1	2	1	6	5	5	6	4	2	29
	2	5+	4	3	1	6	1			15
1825	1	4	2	4	3	6	1	6	1	23
	2	2		4	8	9	4	4	2	31
	3	4	1	1	5	8	3	2	1	21
	4	3-	1	5	3	7	4	4	1	25
	5	4+	7	4	4	4	3	4	3	29
1827	1	3	1	2	4	6	2	3	3	21
	2	5+	7	2	6	7	2	1		25
	3	1	1	1	2	7	4	3	1	19
	4	2			7	5	3	6	1	22
	5	3	1	5	5	8	7	3	1	30
	6	2		1	5	7	7	4	1	25
	7	3	1	2	5	5	5	4	2	24
	8	4	2	1	3	7	4	2	2	21
	9	4+	2	5	5	8	3	4		27
	10	6+	2	1		1	1		1	6
	11	2	3	4	2	7	3	2	3	24
	12	1	2	6	4	3	4	3	1	23
	13	3	3	3	2	6	6	3	2	25
	14	8				1				1
1828	1	2	1	2	5	10	4	5	3	30
	2	3	4	2	9	5	4	6	1	31
1829	1	4+	1	1	3	5	4	3	4	21
	2	2	1	2	3	6	2	4	2	20
	3	4	3	1	1	8	3	7	4	27
	4	2	2	1	2	4	7	4	3	23
	5	4	1		2	1	4	9		17
	6	3			3	5	5	4	2	19
	7	1	1		2	11	4	5	4	27
	8	4+	1	2	2	4	8	1		18
	9	4	3	5	2	5	4	2	3	24
	10	5+	5	4	2	1				12
	11	4+	2	5	2	4	5	3	3	24
	12	3	1	2	4	6	2	4	1	20
1830	1	4+	2	6	7	11	3	1		46
	2	1	2	3	1	3	9	3	3	24
	3	3	4	3	6	4	5	3	3	28
	4	2	3	1	3	4	3	10	2	26
	5	2	1	1	1	9	4	4	2	22
	6	2	1	2	2	4	5	5	3	22
	7	4	2	2	1	11	4	3	1	24
	8	3	4	3		3	7	3	5	25
1831	1	1	1	4		9	5	3	2	24
	2	3	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	16
	3	1	6	2	2	7	6	3	3	29
	4	2	1		1	4	7	5	2	20
	5	1	3	1	2	9	5	6	4	30
	6	3	1	1	3	5	4	6	1	21

Table 3 (Cont'd.)

Year	JR #	Rarity	AG/G	VG	F	VF	XF	AU	UNC	TOTAL
1832	1	2	2	4	2	4	4	4	3	23
	2	2	1	3	2	4	11	3	3	27
	3	4	8	2	6	5	4	5	2	32
	4	3	2	3	3	4	3	6	1	22
	5	2		3	4	1	4	5	3	20
	6	3	1	2	1	4	7	4	1	20
	7	3	2		1	5	8	5	3	24
1833	1	3	1		5	8	3	3	3	23
	2	5	1	5	3	6	2	4	2	23
	3	6	2	2	3	4	2	3	2	18
	4	2	4	5	5	3	4	5	2	28
	5	1	1		4	5	6	7	1	24
	6	1		4	4	3	3	6	2	22
	7	5	5	7	3	6	2	1	3	26
1834	8	5	1	2	4	9	4	6	2	28
	9	2	1	3	3	5	7	3	2	24
	10	3		2	2	5	5	4	2	20
	1	1	2	3	2	2	7	4	2	22
	2	3	2	4	1	8	6	4	3	28
	3	5	7	7	1	5	4	4		28
	4	3	3		5	9	4	5	3	29
1835	5	1	1	3	1	5	6	5	4	25
	6	2	2	4	4	7	5	5	4	31
	7	2	3	1	1	6	5	4	4	24
	1	1	1	3	5	4	2	6	2	23
	2	4		0	3	6	7	7	3	26
	3	2	2	2	2	4	6	6	4	26
	4	2		3	2	5	5	5	2	22
1836	5	1	1	2	2	5	7	4	2	23
	6	4	3	3	2	4	3	5	2	22
	7	4	3	2	4	8	4	5	1	27
	8	3		4	2	5	4	4	2	21
	9	3	1	1	4	3	8	7	2	26
	1	3	1	3	1	11	6	3	6	31
	2	2	1	1	1	5	7	5	3	23
1837	3	3	1	1	4	8	6	6	3	29
	1	4	1	3	6	6	2	4	5	27
	2	3	1	3	1	8	2	5	3	23
	3	2		2	1	10	6	5	1	25
	4	1	2		3	9	4	3	2	23

Total reported in all grades 2,985

Table 4 - Finest Known Draped Bust Dimes

Year	JR-1	JR-2	JR-3	JR-4	JR-5	JR-6	JR-7
1796	66	65?	63	67	62	64	Fr det
1797	66	65					
1798	66	63	66	65?			
1800	58	67					
1801	64?	61					
1802	AU det	61	58	62			
1803	40	58	64	55	XF Dam		
1804	55	58					
1805	65	66					
1807	66						

Table 5 - Finest Known Capped Bust Dimes

Year	JR-1	JR-2	JR-3	JR-4	JR-5	JR-6	JR-7	JR-8	JR-9	JR-10	JR-11	JR-12	JR-13	JR-14
1809	65													
1811	65													
1814	67	65	67	67	65									
1820	66	66	65	65	65	64	65	64	68	66	66	60	65	
1821	65	65	63	65	66	65	65	67	66	65				
1822	66													
1823	66	64	66											
1824	66	40												
1825	65	66	65	65	66									
1827	66	53	65	66	66	67	65	66	58	67	65	67	65	35
1828	67	66												
1829	63	67	66	65	55*	65	67	63	64	35	63	66		
1830	50	65	67	67	67	66	65	64						
1831	67	66	67	66	66	67								
1832	66	66	65	65	65	65	67							
1833	66	66	65	65	65	65	67	64	67	65				
1834	68	65	58	66	67	65	67							
1835	65	66	65	65	65	64	60	65	65					
1836	66	67	67											
1837	64	65	66	66										

*Rumors of an MS65 1829 JR-5

Kitchen Wisdom and the American Heraldic Eagle as a Symbol of War and Peace

Gabriela Luschei, PhD & Jim Matthews

The last thing we expected one fine spring morning was that our tour of a private kitchen would reignite an old controversy concerning whether an olive branch—the universal symbol of peace—or a quiver of arrows—representing martial power—should be clutched in the dexter talon of the American heraldic eagle. Yet there we were, admiring Mrs. Rosalie Leigh’s elegant country kitchen when this long-debated issue unexpectedly came to the fore. Mrs. Leigh’s kitchen, overlooking a serene Virginia landscape, glowed with the warm tones of reclaimed barn wood, nicely set off by a quantity of folk-art roosters.

In spite of the roosters clamoring for attention, our eye was quickly drawn to a noble bird, displayed prominently on a punched-tin cabinet front upon which Mrs. Leigh had rendered the American heraldic eagle design. This design was copied from an antique pie safe (ca. 1860-1880) which also stood in the adjoining room. In order to achieve symmetry on a set of doors, the cabinet maker had simply reversed a pattern to create a mirror image of left- and right- eagles facing each other, with the placement of olive branch and arrows similarly reversed in the two images.

This got us thinking again about the “correct” placement of these symbols of war and peace in the eagle’s grasping claws and the broad latitude allowed for artistic creativity in interpreting a heraldic blazon. It seems to us that Mrs. Leigh’s historic pie cabinet represents a sort of everyday, kitchen wisdom providing as good an insight as any into this centuries-old controversy. (See below: photo detail of cabinet by Mrs. Rosalie Leigh. The reverse side, where the design was punched, is pictured on the left, and the cabinet exterior is pictured on the right.)



Figure A: Photo by Kristie Leigh, July '11



Figure B: Photo by Kristie Leigh, July '11

The question of the “correct” placement of arrows and olives in the eagle’s talons is one we have been following with interest since attending the 2000 Philadelphia ANA, where we took full advantage of the convention center’s proximity to Independence Square by visiting a number of historic sites. It was then that we caught our first glimpse of this heraldic eagle (pictured below) painted above the Senate Chamber of Congress Hall. We were immediately struck by the fact that the arrows were held in the eagle’s right, or dexter, talon. The National Park interpreters who guided our tour date this painting to the period between 1803 and 1806. The painting is believed to commemorate the 1790’s, when Philadelphia served as the nation’s capital and congressional sessions were held in this building.



Figure C: Photo by
Gabriela Luschei, June '11

Left-facing eagle clutching arrows in its dexter (right) talon, painted above the Senate Chamber of Congress Hall and located only a few blocks from the original Philadelphia Mint. Of considerable importance is the fact there are 15 stars pictured above the eagle. Like the U.S. flag, which was subject to many design changes as states joined the Union, the star motif on early U.S. coinage changed frequently in both the style and the number of stars, as well as their configuration.

Americans are now accustomed to regularity in our established public symbols and we seldom think about these issues in contemporary life. Yet immediately following the American Revolution, the newly formed republic had to quickly devise all the outward symbols of nationhood including a flag, a national anthem, and an official seal, as well as some form of universal currency. This was no mean task and we still see nascent countries struggling to meet this challenge, the latest example being Southern Sudan, which is currently striving to put new systems into place in celebration of its newly won independence.

The general public tends to regard patriotic symbols as being “set in stone,” but decades passed before the symbols of our newly-formed nation were securely put in place. The National Anthem was not written until 1812, following the Battle of Baltimore, and even such a visible symbol as our national flag remained in flux for a long period of time. The flag’s early history reflects the nation’s rapid expansion as stars and stripes were added for each new state that joined the union until the admission of Tennessee, which became the 16th state on June 1, 1796. For more than two decades, the U.S.

flew what is commonly referred to as the “star-spangled banner,” displaying 15 stars and 15 stripes. It was not until 1818, under President Monroe, that the design reverted to 13 stripes, representing the original colonies, with one star representing each of the original states.

As a national symbol, the history the Great Seal of the United States is less widely known, but of great relevance to numismatics owing to the use of its heraldic eagle design on early U.S. coinage. Now instantly recognizable, this design has been subject to wide interpretation in its relatively short history. Such minute details as how many of the eagle’s claws are visible, whether the talons grasp from in front or behind, how many tail feathers are displayed, and whether or not the eagle’s tongue can be seen vary greatly, with different engravers demonstrating distinct preferences. This variation in design is consistent with the heraldic tradition as a whole; it had long been the custom to allow for artistic discretion in designing a coat of arms. As long as an engraver’s design matches the official blazon, or written description, there is no “correct” way to depict it (McMillan, 2011, ¶ 3.1).



Figure D: Photo by
Gabriela Luschei, June '11

American eagle, ca. 1800-1830, made of gilded pine. One of the largest examples of its type, and possibly made by a carver of ship mastheads, this eagle is currently on display in the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Of particular note, the eagle’s talons are shown in a natural position, bearing neither olive branch nor arrows. The display reads: “The American bald eagle was adopted by the United States Congress for the national seal in 1792. It soon became the most popular of patriotic decorative motifs.”

This article aims to provide a bit of background concerning the Great Seal and its use on coinage by the Philadelphia Mint, in addition to revisiting the interesting question of whether these early U.S. coins were engraved “correctly” or not and whether these designs were intended to express the nation’s preference for peace or its readiness for war. America was hardly on a peaceful footing in the 1790s, a time when our French allies were also engulfed in revolutionary chaos, and it may have been entirely appropriate for an artist to place the arrows in the “keep ready” stance of the right claw given the prevailing circumstances.

We also find it intriguing that the United States, a nation founded upon revolution, turned to the medieval tradition of heraldry in creating one of its most important symbols. Heraldry was a tradition with “roots deep in the class structure of the Old World...dating from the knights and nobility of 12th-century Europe” (Koppelman, 1996, ¶1). Owing to heraldry’s affiliation with the courts of Europe, heraldic shields had long been long used on the reverse of European coins and were familiar to the merchants and citizens of a newly-formed republic that were hungry to embrace a credible currency.



Figure E: Photo reprinted from a U.S. Dept of State brochure, 2003.

“First Great Seal, possibly engraved by Robert Scot of Philadelphia in 1782.” (U.S. Department of State, 2003, p. 6) Scot was British and trained as a watchmaker in England before becoming an engraver and moving to the United States in 1777. Scot was appointed as state engraver of Virginia in 1780, moving to Philadelphia in 1781. Following the death of Mint Engraver Joseph Wright in 1793, Scot was commissioned Engraver of the United States by Mint Director Rittenhouse. Scot served in this post for 30 years until his death in 1823. (Breen, 1988, ¶1-2)

The heraldic eagle device which appears on the Great Seal of the United States was developed by three successive committees, with the final design requiring six years and the creative contributions of 16 persons to reach completion. The first committee, appointed by Congress to design a device for a seal at the Continental Congress on July 4th, 1776, consisted of Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson, who “struggled unsuccessfully with Biblical and classical themes, including the Children of Israel in the Wilderness and the Judgment of Hercules” before consulting the portrait artist Pierre Eugene du Simitiere, who brought to the project a background knowledge of heraldry (U.S. Department of State, 2003, p. 2). This committee produced a design but failed to win Congressional approval for its recommendations. Several elements of this first effort were retained in the final design, including the use of a shield and the Latin motto *E Pluribus Unum* (out of many, one) on the obverse of the Great Seal as well as the Eye of Providence and date of the nation’s independence (MDCCLXXVI, or 1776) on the reverse.

A second committee was then appointed by Congress to make recommendations for the Great Seal. This committee, convened in 1780, was composed of James Lowell, John Morin Scott, and William Churchill Union. This committee solicited the help of Francis Hopkinson, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, who also played a key role in the design of the American flag. This committee produced a second design but similarly failed to win congressional approval. Once again, elements from this committee's recommendations were retained in the final design, namely the 13 red and white stripes, a constellation of 13 six-pointed stars, and an olive branch. The third and final committee consisted of John Rutledge, Arthur Middleton, and Elias Boudinot, but relied almost entirely on the work of William Barton, a Philadelphia lawyer and numismatist well versed in heraldry, who contributed an eagle to the final design. Barton's design employed a small, crested white eagle shown "displayed" (that is, with wings widespread) rather than the American bald eagle which was later adopted for the Great Seal. Congress once again failed to approve this new design, finally turning over the work of all three committees to Charles Thompson, who was then serving as Secretary of Congress. Although not an artist, Thompson was an accomplished administrator who was able to bring together the recommendations of all three committees to produce a final blazon. (U.S. Department of State, 2003, pp. 1-12)



Figure F: Photo reprinted from a U.S. Dept of State brochure, 2003.

Pictured here is our favorite interpretation of the Great Seal's blazon, owing to its simplicity of design and clarity when viewed with the naked eye. Note also the placement of the Motto high, with stars in a circle, the arrows / olive branch reversed, and the boxy dimensions of the shield.

"The Great Seal of 1841, engraved in steel by John Peter Van Ness Throop of Washington, DC. It departed from 1782 design by showing only six arrows in eagle's claw and by giving stars five, rather than six, points. It also added fruit to olive branch." (U.S. Department of State, 2003, p. 8)

Working to unify elements proposed by each of these preceding committees, Thompson wrote an official description or blazon for the device of the Great Seal which was ultimately approved in June of 1782 (U.S. Department of State, 2003, pp. 3-4). Although Thompson's description of the heraldic design finally earned Congressional approval in 1782, the official blazon was not accompanied by any drawing and did not

specify whether the eagle was to be right- or left-facing. Depictions of the heraldic eagle design varied widely during the post-Revolutionary period, partly owing to this oversight, and any significance of a left- or right-facing eagle was probably unintended.

Another source of possible confusion in interpreting this blazon was the general lack of awareness that in heraldry, dexter refers to the right side of the design as seen from the point of view of the person carrying the arms, not the viewer. While heraldry was widely understood in Europe, it was not well known in the Americas at that time and this gave rise to a good deal of artistic variation. In any event, “once the error crept in, it is probable that the other painters, seamstresses, and metalworkers simply reproduced whatever they saw in the models from which they were working, unaware that anything was wrong with them” (McMillan, 2011, ¶ 2.2). McMillan explains:

By heraldic convention, any bird or beast automatically faces to its own right unless the blazon of the arms stipulates otherwise. But the United States was not rich in trained heraldic artists, and it is quite probable that many craftsmen contracted to produce renderings of the arms for various official and unofficial purposes simply didn't know it mattered. Another factor may have been that many early renderings were engraved, which requires the artist to cut the emblazonment in mirror image, so that it will come out properly when impressed on paper. (McMillan, 2011, ¶ 2.1)¹

This reversing of emblems and mirror imaging of designs also plays an important role in the production of coins, as we shall soon see. Returning for the moment to the classic elements of design, whether an eagle is left- or right-facing eagle is far less significant in heraldry than the placement of the symbols in its dexter (right) or sinister (left) claws. The Congressional resolution adopting the coat of arms and official seal clearly specified that the olive branches should be placed in the dexter talon (signifying the country's preference for peace over war), yet Thompson's description states only that “the Olive branch and arrows denote the power of peace and war which is exclusively vested in Congress” (Thompson, quoted in State Dept. brochure, 2003, p. 5). Furthermore, neither description specifies the number of arrows or olive leaves, nor whether the living branch should bear fruit. Consequently, engravings of the Great Seal of the United States have been subject to significant variation since it was first adopted in 1782.

¹ McMillan presents many interesting images and examples of how artistic rendering of the Great Seal's blazon has varied over time and in different locations. We refer interested readers to his excellent history concerning the origins and symbolism of the American heraldic eagle, which can be found on the American Heraldry Society's web page, under the tab “The Arms of the USA—Artistic Expression.”



Figure G: Photo reprinted from a U.S. Dept of State brochure, 2003.

The Great Seal of the United States in its current rendition. Note the arrows in the sinister claw and the single row of tail feathers.

“Many people believe that the olive branch held in the eagle's right talon is supposed to have 13 leaves and 13 olives, just as his left talon holds 13 arrows representing the 13 states. There is no reason an artist shouldn't depict the arms with 13 leaves and olives, and in fact the present emblazonment on the great seal, which is also used for many other official purposes, does show 13 leaves and olives, but this is purely a matter for the artist's discretion.” (McMillan, 2011, ¶3.3)

From the time of its inception, the United States has shown a degree of ambivalence concerning its stated preference for peace over war. First President George Washington warned members of the new Congress to avoid entangling alliances and thus stay out of overseas conflicts. Since Washington's time, however, the temptations to power and economic expansion as well as the necessity of national defense have driven the U.S. into many foreign conflicts. President Obama's remarks upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in December of 2009 reflect the nation's continuing ambivalence toward war and peace. Even while accepting the prize, Obama asserted the nation's right to wage war, not only in its own defense but on behalf of causes it supports around the world. Acknowledging that the U.S. was engaged in two foreign wars at the time the prize was awarded, Obama stated that “to say that force may sometimes be necessary is not a call to cynicism—it is a recognition of history; the imperfections of man and the limits of reason” (Obama, 2009, ¶18). One can well imagine these words being spoken on the floor of Independence Hall as the rights and limits of governmental authority were fiercely debated during well-documented sessions of the first Continental Congress.

The United States Arms, appearing on the Great Seal as well as on the first issues of precious metal coinage, are popularly said to be emblazoned with the arrows in the right, or dexter, talon in times of war, reverting to placement of the olive branch in the dexter talon during times of peace (although this assertion remains a matter for speculation). The appearance of the heraldic eagle displaying these symbols on U.S. coinage is widely believed to be the work of Assistant Engraver John Smith Gardner, apparently responsible for adapting the Great Seal for use by the Philadelphia Mint

into dies for coinage. For many years, the Heraldic Eagle design was believed to be the work of Robert Scot, but Hilt (1980) and Dannreuther (2006)² have noted that significant variations seen on the earliest appearances of the Heraldic Eagle design suddenly disappear around the time of Gardner's departure from the Mint. This would imply that it was not Scot's hand, but indeed Gardner's, that initially engraved the master hub for the Heraldic Eagle used on the Quarter Eagle die of late 1796—the first appearance of that reverse design. Dannreuther describes the process involved in creating these design punches, or hubs, which were used to manufacture the dies for U.S. coinage:

The design punches used to create the major devices found on all U.S. early coins were technically called hubs; they were placed into the screw presses to impress devices into the working dies. Hubs are large punches on which the positive image is directly engraved into the die steel. These hubs are used to produce either a master die or a working die. Of course, only the major devices were part of these hubs [emphases added]. (Dannreuther & Bass, 2006, p. 27)

The fact that only the major devices were engraved on these hubs becomes significant in identifying early die varieties. The secret lies in the coins themselves; when comparing the fineness of the stars, the placement of lettering, and other details on these early coins, one readily understands why Gardner's design work has been considered more elegant than that of Scot.

Gardner began his employment at the Mint on November 19, 1794 and is believed to have made a number of working obverse and reverse dies from hubs he engraved. He was a regular employee at the Philadelphia Mint until March 30, 1796, but was paid for part time work from July 1, 1796 through August 26, 1796. Gardner's hand is believed to have created three working hubs for the gold coinage during this latter period when he returned to the Mint. In mid-1796, these hubs could be used interchangeably with silver denominations of the same relative size. The first hub prepared was that for the quarter eagle, which could also be used for dimes (having the same diameter); by the same token, the half eagle hub was the size needed for quarters and the eagle hub was interchangeable with the half dollar. Gardner probably did not engrave the hub for the silver dollar or the half dime, as these appear to be later work by Scot.

² The design features of these early coin hubs and dies are detailed by John Dannreuther in his authoritative book *Early U.S. Gold Coin Varieties: A Study of Die States, 1796 to 1834*. For more information on this subject, as well as photos of the most complete variety set of early U.S. gold coins ever, assembled by Harry W. Bass, Jr., see "Appendix A: Large Eagle Reverse Varieties" (pp. 534-541).

Gardner, in a letter dated August 11, 1795, wrote to the Director of the Mint, Henry De Saussure asking for a raise in pay. In this letter Gardner specifically states he made the reverse dies for all denominations (Hilt, 1980, p.8), so it is logical that Gardner would have been asked to create the new hubs for the heraldic eagle design that were used at the new reverse for coinage on gold and silver coins. Furthermore, these three master hubs were used for a brief time to create dies, and were replaced with new, revised hubs by Scot as soon as he was able to create them after Gardner left the employment of the mint. The evidence points to Scot's hubs showing a clearly different hand and style in several design elements of the Heraldic Eagle.

Gardner's hubs included the clouds above the eagle, the eagle itself and the shield, along with the arrows and the branch. Each of these gold hubs by Gardner had an eagle with a long neck and a visible tongue. The eagle also displayed three visible claws over the branch and arrows and two rows of tail feathers. Stars over the eagle's head were not engraved in the hub, but were punched by hand into the coin dies, usually in a straight line pattern rather than in arcs. The shield lines started with the red stripes (three or four fine vertical stripes within each vertical stripe) on the left edge of the shield, alternating with open spaces, totaling the stated 15 lines representing states of the union. When Tennessee joined the United States on June 1, 1796 it was decided to no longer add stars or stripes beyond the 15 already in place. Coins of this period still added stars up to the number 16. With the addition of stars to keep up with the number of states, the crowded little half dimes had become ungainly, so a new policy was adopted in 1797 to revert to the original 13 stars and stripes for future dies.

Artists build upon what they see; if Gardner had been given the assignment to design a new reverse for the quarter eagle of 1796, it is entirely possible that he would have visited Congress Hall and viewed a wall painting of the Great Seal similar to the one that called our attention in 2000. It is indeed possible that this very painting was on the wall of the Senate Wing while Gardner was working just a few blocks away and he might easily have seen this work. While well-suited for display on a high wall, this artistic design was ill-suited to the confines of a round coin, so modifications had to be made. The arrows and branch were flipped upright, the eagle's head was reversed to face its right, the clouds arranged in an arc pattern spanning the eagle's wings, and room left for the stars to fill in below. The Motto, E PLURIBUS UNUM, was carefully printed on a ribbon scroll that spanned the eagle's wings supported by a loop in its beak, while a shield protected its breast.

Recall that the Director of the Mint, Elias Boudinot, had served on the committee to help design the Great Seal and was undoubtedly quite familiar with this design. Boudinot would have certainly assisted Gardner in the execution of these important die hubs for the quarter eagles. When the very first 1796 quarter eagles with the new heraldic eagle reverse appeared in circulation, coins of such importance would have been subject to considerable scrutiny.

Examination of the various dies produced with the initial heraldic eagle coins point to two engravers at work, with definite differences in style. One group lasted a short time, from 1796 to 1798, and these graceful nuances were replaced with a second style hub used on all dies after 1798 with a few minor exceptions of older dies that were later pressed into service.

The first style includes the following features; the eagle has two rows of tail feathers, the stars above the eagle are arranged in straight lines or a “star cross” pattern, the eagle has a long neck and tongue, and the arrows are grasped by three separate claws over the top of the device. A second artistic hand appears soon thereafter, developing a second major style that has the eagle shown with three rows of tail feathers, the stars arranged in an arc pattern, displaying a short neck, no tongue, and a single claw clutching the arrows over the top of the device.



*Figure H: P: 1797 BD-7
Gardener Reverse \$5*



*Figure I: 1799 BD-5
Scot Reverse \$5*

(Both photos reprinted courtesy of Stacks-Bowers online catalogues, retrieved in July '11)

Curiously, whether Gardner did in fact engrave the dies used by the Mint for these early issues has not been firmly established, although it has been noted that by 1797, after Gardner was no longer employed at the Mint, “the final eagle hubs with the short, thick neck is most certainly by Robert Scot, as he was the only engraver in the Mint at the time they were made” (Dannreuther & Bass, 2006, p. 534). These hubs have three rows of tail feathers, and a single claw over the top clutching the arrows. This design was generally engraved into dies that used the arc star pattern.

Although a cameo portrait of Liberty on the obverse of a 1796 quarter eagle with the word LIBERTY above and the date below may indeed be an impressive sight for collectors today, it was far more practical to include stars surrounding the head of Liberty in order to protect the open fields from wear and normal circulation marks. Stars were added to the third quarter eagle obverse die engraved in late 1796, so clearly, design changes continued during this time frame on this precise denomination. The arrows stayed put in the right claw. Also noteworthy is the placement of the reverse stars above the eagle but below the clouds, which are arranged in the star cross or straight line pattern.

For the first pair of reverse dies, Gardner arranged the stars in a fixed line pattern (or “Star Cross” pattern), often overlapping the clouds and squeezed into spaces wholly inadequate as more states joined the Union. In some instances, obverse dies have sixteen stars, reverse dies show 13 stars, and vice versa! Reverting to the original 13 colonies represented by 13 stars made stylistic sense for many reasons.

In point of fact, it was commonplace for the U.S. Mint to change designs during these initial years, with the entire design of the 1793 Large Cent changing completely—both obverse and reverse—three times in 1793 alone! A great many dies were likely discarded as obsolete long before their useful life was finished and many dies were perhaps never used at all during this period of rapid change. Later hubs were forged in the strongest steel available to create new dies through 1804, when the final hub bearing the heraldic eagle design was engraved by Scot for use on quarter dollars.

In 1797, a master hub of the Heraldic Eagle design was introduced for use on half eagles. This occurred mid-year, as the hub apparently had to be painstakingly engraved before dies could be produced. Here again, the initial master hub seen on the Heraldic half eagles in 1797 seems to be the hand of Gardner, showing two rows of tail feathers, a longer neck on the eagle, the stars above arranged in straight lines, with three claws clutching the arrows.

The heraldic eagle design has historically been attributed to Scot, although Dannreuther’s research casts new light on this subject. Regardless of who engraved the

dies, one of the key points we would like to bring out is that the engraver's placement of the arrows in the dexter talon and the olive branch in the sinister talon has generally been considered an error:

While Scot's design has both admirers and detractors, he did make one obvious technical error: He placed the arrows—symbolizing armed might—in the eagle's right (dexter or honorable) claw, and the olive branch of peace in the left (sinister) claw, reversing the placement seen on the Great Seal and heraldically conveying a warlike message rather than one of peace. Whether this was an honest mistake or a reflection of his own hawkish sentiments, no one will ever know. (Koppelman, 1996, ¶ 4)

The popularity of this design notwithstanding, it seems to us that both John Smith Gardner and Robert Scot have been subject to more criticism than is truly warranted on the “correctness” (or incorrectness) of this early design. Given the prevalence of mix-ups in depictions of the heraldic eagle and the as-yet-undefined nature of a nation whose independence was recently won by dint of warfare, it may have been perfectly suitable to place the arrows in the eagle's right claw. The dies engraved for these coins in 1796 followed just a few years after the American and French revolutions, when many armies were on the march worldwide and the international relations were in a frightful state. Surely Mint Director Elias Boudinot would have paid considerable attention to the design execution by Gardner. Furthermore, as Gardner was designing master hubs—in positive relief—it would be impossible not to notice something as important as the placement of the arrows and olive branch incorrectly on the master hub, which no doubt required multiple design sketches and days of work to create by hand engraving.

Considering that dozens of changes—some major, some minor—were demanded in our earliest coinage, if the arrows had been placed incorrectly, such a blunder would undoubtedly have been corrected. The fact that so many changes were implemented clearly indicates that someone was paying attention to the fine nuances of these designs. If indeed, the arrows were placed in the incorrect talon, Boudinot or someone in high authority would surely have noticed the mistake and future hubs and dies would have been corrected. This was a dynamic period at the Mint, as well as in our nation's history.

The sum of our observations leads us to conclude that the war-ready arrows were indeed intended to be clutched in the right claw of the eagle, while the olive branch of peace was relegated to the weaker (in heraldic terms) left claw. We believe that the

master hubs for U.S. coinage employing this design demonstrated a preference for warlike placement up until 1804, when the last draped bust denomination was finally launched on the silver quarter dollar for that year. It is our considered belief that the arrows were purposefully placed in the “ready for action” stance, as fledgling America stretched her new wings in the rising sun of freedom and readied to defend her new nation.

The U.S. heraldic eagle has become a well-loved national symbol and it continues to inspire artists today. For more than 200 years, this design has been subject to wide interpretation, not only by eminent mint engravers but by the makers of pie safes and kitchen cabinets. In this way, the design itself is an apt tribute to democracy—a heraldic device, yes, but no longer the sole property of kings. In learning about its proud history, we have developed a fond appreciation for the heraldic eagle design. May it long continue to be used by ordinary citizens in representation of this fair country!

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Heraldic Eagle Die Analysis

Part 1 – The 13 Colonies

By David Finkelstein

Is there any design or device on a Draped Bust Heraldic Eagle coin, minted from 1795 to 1807, that symbolizes the 13 original colonies?

Guess 1

You might respond that there are 13 stars on the obverse of the coins to represent the original 13 colonies. Good guess. You are correct most of the time, but not all the time.

All of the obverses of the \$2 ½, \$5 and \$10 Heraldic Eagle gold coins have 13 stars, except as follows:

- No stars: 1796 \$2 ½ Quarter Eagles BD-1 (for Bass-Dannreuther 1) and BD-2 have no stars.
- 15 stars: 1795 \$5 Half Eagles BD-13, BD-14 and BD-15, and 1797 BD-6 and BD-7 have 15 stars arranged 10 X 5 (*see Figure 1*).
- 16 stars: 1796 \$2 ½ Quarter Eagle BD-3 has 16 stars arranged 8 X 8 (*see Figure 2*). 1797 \$5 Half Eagle BD-5 has 16 stars arranged 11 X 5. 1797 \$10 Eagles BD-2, BD-3 and BD-4 have 16 stars arranged 10 X 6.



Figure 1 – 1795 \$5 BD-15
15 Stars



Figure 2 – 1796 \$2 ½ BD-3
16 Stars

Guess 2

How about the stars on the reverse above the eagle's head? Nice try, but incorrect. While all of the Heraldic Eagle Bust Half Dollars and \$10 Gold Eagles have 13 stars above the eagle's head, the \$2 ½ Gold Quarter Eagles and \$5 Gold Half Eagles have either 13 stars, 14 stars (*see Figure 3*) or 16 stars (*see Figure 4*) above the eagle's head. The 1799/8 B-3 BB-141 Bust Dollar has 15 stars above the eagle's head (*See Figure 5*). Guess again.



*Figure 3 - 1804 \$2 ½ BD-2
14 Stars*



*Figure 4 - 1797 \$2 ½ BD-1
16 Stars*



Figure 5 - 1799/8 B-3 BB-141 Bust Dollar - 15 Stars

Guess 3

The shield on the reverse of the Heraldic Eagle coins resembles the shield on The Great Seal of the United States. You can see that easily by eyeballing a picture of the first die of The Great Seal (*see Figure 6*) and any Heraldic Eagle coin (*See Figure 7*).



Figure 6 - First Die of the Great Seal of the United States



*Figure 7 -
1795 \$5 BD-14*

The Great Seal *Blazon* (or description in Heraldry terminology), as adopted by the Continental Congress on June 20, 1782, includes in part:

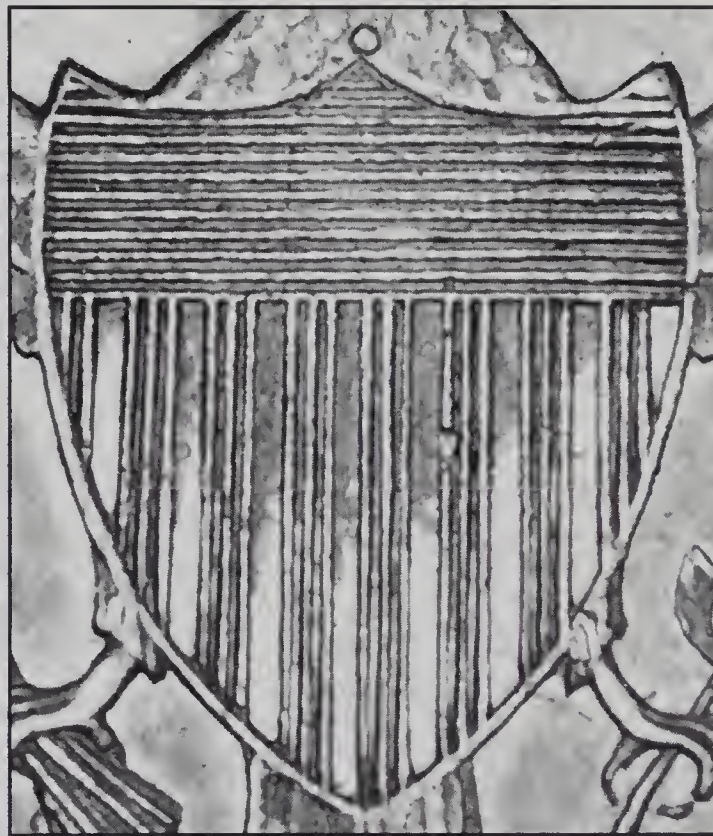
“Arms

Paleways of thirteen pieces Argent and Gules: a Chief, Azure. The Escutcheon on the breast of the American bald Eagle displayed, proper, holding in his dexter talon an Olive branch, and in his sinister a bundle of 13 arrows, all proper, & in his beak a scroll, inscribed with this Motto: “E pluribus unum”.-

The quick translation of “Paleways of thirteen pieces Argent and Gules” is “13 vertical stripes, white and red”. In Heraldry, a vertical band is called a “pale”. “Paleways of thirteen pieces” are 13 vertical bands or stripes. “Gules” is the term for the color red. A pale that is red is depicted by a grouping of multiple close vertical lines. “Argent” is the term for the color white. It is depicted by a blank area.

What I just described is 13 white and red vertical stripes. Each pale and blank area on the Great Seal represented one of the original 13 colonies. Since the shield on the coins is an interpretation of the shield on the Great Seal of the United States, every Heraldic Eagle reverse must have a total of 13 white and red stripes in the shield. Case closed. Problem solved. This article is over. Wrong again!!!

On the 1796 and 1797 dated \$2 ½ Gold Quarter Eagles and the 1795 and 1797 dated \$5 Gold Half Eagles, there are 8 pales (color gules) and 8 argent areas. That is 8 red and 8 white stripes (or 16 stripes), not 13. (*See Figure 8*). In Figure 8, note that the first pale has 2 vertical lines to represent gules, and pales 2 through 8 have 3 vertical lines to represent gules. This will be addressed in a future article.



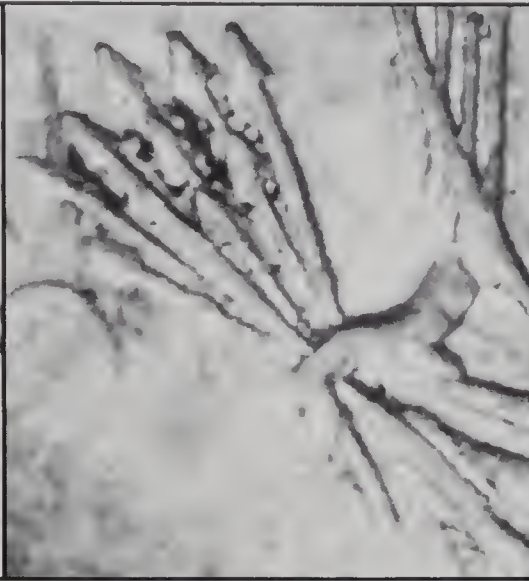
*Figure 8 - 1797 \$5 BD-5
8 Red 8 White Stripes*

Guess 4

How about the arrows in the eagle's claw? Not even close!!! \$2 ½ Gold Quarter Eagles dated 1796 through 1804 have 8 or 10 arrows, and \$2 ½ Gold Quarter Eagles dated 1805 through 1807 have 13 arrows. There were only 4 reverse dies used to produce all of the Heraldic Eagle Half Dimes from 1800 through 1805. They are identified as Reverse A, B, C and D. Reverse A and D have 8 arrows, and Reverse B and C have 9 arrows. The 1806/5 B-1 Quarter has 11 arrows. The 1805 O-113 Half Dollar and 1799 \$10 BD-8 have 12 arrows. \$5 Half Eagles dated 1795 through part of 1802 have 8 arrows, and the remainder dated 1802 through 1805 have 9 arrows. (*See Figures 9 through 13*).



*Figure 9 - 1797 \$2 ½
BD-1 / 8 Arrows*



*Figure 10 - 1801 Half Dime
LM-2 / 9 Arrows*



*Figure 11 - 1804 \$2 ½ BD-
1 / 10 Arrows*



*Figure 12 - 1806/5 25C
B-1 11 Arrows
(Left)*



*Figure 13 - 1799 \$10
BD-8 12 Arrows
(Right)*

The Answer

Russell Logan was a collector and researcher of Bust coins. In addition to being a founding member of JRCS, he was a co-author of both Federal Half Dimes, 1792-1837, and Early United States Dimes 1796-1837. In the second to last paragraph on page 16 of Early United States Dimes, Russ wrote:

“Each wing of the eagle has 13 feather tips on the outer edge of the wing”.

After researching most, if not all, of the numismatic references relating to Heraldic Eagle coins, I have been unable to find any other reference that identifies this fact. Finally, we have the answer. The eagle's outer wing feathers symbolize the original 13 colonies. See Figure 14. Note that I added a black dot on each of the outer wing feathers. There are 13 on the eagle's left wing (your right), and there are 13 on the eagle's right wing (your left).



Figure 14 - 13 Feathers Left & 13 Feathers Right

Conclusion

I have counted the number of outer eagle wing feathers on every Heraldic Eagle reverse die. Regardless of date, die marriage and denomination, I believe it was the Mint's intent to engrave every Heraldic Eagle reverse with 13 outer feathers in the eagle's left wing and 13 outer feathers in the eagle's right wing.

Exception

Every Heraldic Eagle reverse die from 1795 to 1807 has 13 outer feathers in the eagle's left wing and 13 outer feathers in the eagle's right wing, except for 3 dies. Three \$5 Half Eagle reverse dies have 13 outer feathers in the eagle's left wing and 12 outer feathers in the eagle's right wing. Why? 25 of the 26 outer wing feathers were on the Hub. One feather in the eagle's right wing was hand engraved on the Working Dies. On 3 dies, the engraver did not add the 13th wing feather in the eagle's right wing. This topic will be addressed in Heraldic Eagle Die Analysis - Part 2.

To be continued...

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